Guidelines on How Best to Assist the League

Introduction

All of the social crises of U.S. state monopoly capitalism are greatly magnified as they effect youth. It is now widely recognized that the youth are experiencing an all-sided chronic crisis and that is one of the most important and sharp social issues throughout the capitalist world and particularly in the United States. The monopolists are concerned about this crisis from their class standpoint and all working people are concerned from the opposite viewpoint.

It is also evident that the youth of our country are unwilling to settle for being treated as an "excess baggage" generation or to allow the "criminal generation" label to be applied as a diversion from the real criminals - the racist monopoly capitalists. They are moving to the left, participating in massive democratic struggles for jobs, peace and affirmative action and searching for more fundamental answers. Rapidly increasing numbers among young workers, high school and colleg students are taking a serious look at socialism and Marxism-Leninism.

There is also much evidence that the adult working population is deeply concerned about youth's situation and is more ready to respond in support of the just demands of the youth than on almost any other question. This arises from mutual self-interest in unity between working adults and the millions of jobless youth, etc. It also comes from an intense feeling that a lifetime of struggle to make ends meet should result in something better than children faced with a prospect of permanent unemployment.

It is within this framework that our Party seeks to strengthen still further its role in t he struggle for youth's needs and in the building of the Young Workers Liberation League (YWLL) and sets forth the following guidelines on "How Best to Assist the League."

I. The Basis of the Party's Attitude Toward the League

A. Character of the League

The YWLL fights for the vital needs of youth for peace, jobs and job training, democratic rights and affirmative action, a free quality integrated education through college and a secure, happy future - a future which can only be fully assured by socialism. It provides youth with the opportunity to learn about and study the liberating science of the working class - Marxism-Leninism through classes, films, summer youth encampments, etc.

The League also provides healthy social, cultural and sports programs. It is concerned with the rounded building of character of its young members so they may have a happy and fruitful life of participation in social struggle from a working class point of view.

It is in the course of these varied activities that League members mold their own world outlook, political and social ideas, talents and personal development. In this sense then, the League is an educational organization, educating youth in the spirit of scientific socialism - Marxism-Leninism.

Because of these qualities, the League is able to and seeks to play a leading role among the young generation as a whole in uniting them to fight for their vital needs. It recognizes that to fight successfully for these needs requires not only youth unity but also alliance with all anti-monopoly class and social forces, labor in the first place.

The League is composed of young working people, high school and college students, ranging in age generally from 14 through 25, though some of its leaders are older. In its ranks are to be found Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, Native American Indian and Asian-American youth in addition to white youth.

While the organization is Marxist-Leninist- led, youth are welcomed to membership or participation in activities based on desire to support or participate in any of its programs, without being required to make a commitment to Marxism-Leninism. The League has every possibility of becoming a mass organization in size and it is a mass organization in character. But as can be seen from the above description, it is a mass organization of a unique kind. Also, it should be noted that the League and the Party officially are fraternal organizations.

B. What Our Attitude Is and Why

The Communist Party seeks to do everything it can to assist the League in its all-round building and development. This follows from the nature of each organization and their interrelationships. It is appropriate to recall Lenin's words in The Youth International (1916)on the subject:

"Frequently, the middle-aged and the aged do not know how to approach the youth in the proper way; for, necessarily, the youth must come to socialism in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, under other circumstances than their fathers. Incidentally, this is why we must be decidedly in favor of the organizational independence of the Youth League, not only because the opportunists fear this independence, but because of the very nature of the case; for unless they have complete independence the youth will be unable either to train good Socialists from their midst, or to prepare themselves to lead socialism forward."(Lenin's emphasis)

The League, of necessity, is not active on as many fronts as the Party. Both organizations, however, share common positions on immediate issues around which the League is active and on the longer term perspective of what is in the interests of the youth. Our class ideology is the same. The Party exercises the role of vanguard of the working class all working people and the youth.

At the same time, the League plays a leading role in uniting the young generation for democratic demands and in educating youth for socialism. The League works to assure youth become an ally of the working class in the general democratic and anti-monopoly struggle. Its work produces many young people who become convinced Marxist-Leninists. Though recruiting into the Party is not an aim or task of the League, one objective result of its activity is that the Party is able to recruit many more younger people.

Without the support of the young generation, which would also mean a significant division in the working class itself, major social progress would be exceedingly difficult. Without a growing number of youth cadre emerging who are committed to Marxism-Leninism, both the democratic movements and the Communist Party will have great difficul in marching ahead. Therefore, next to our own Party, historically th League is the most important organization in the country now and through the winning of working class power and building socialism.

In the absence of a League, the building of the Communist Party becomes much slower and more difficult. It is also true that in small areas where there is no Party it has proven impossible to build a stable League until the Party is also built. Close cooperation of the Party and League has proven its great value in the fight for the needs of the youth and in building mass movements for all the needs of working people and in mass campaigns such as around elections and building of the press.

Sound fraternal relations between the Party and the League depen in the first place on the Party and how it approaches rendering fraternal assistance to the youth. The Party takes into account the required organizational independence of the League, the fact that it i a national organization with its own structure for making decisions an assuring their implementation. The Party wishes to help strenghten it national and section (corresponds to our districts) leadership and the role in the League. Party guidance, therefore, is of an ideeological and political character, primarily at the national and district level on questions of broad direction and not on details. Guidance is expressed through leading members of the League who are also Party members being on leading Party bodies and through periodic meetings or the "youth question" and the Party's relationship to it. Such guidanc takes into account that League bodies have to make their own decisions and in large measure will have to learn from their own experience.

The Party avoids tendencies to encourage the League to follow mechanically the forms of organization and style of work of the Party and helps to keep to the fore the League's character as an educational youth organization. It rejects treating the League as a subcommittee of the Party whose primary task is to supply vigorous hands to carry out Party quotas and jimmy-higgins type of work. It understands that youth vanguardist tendencies (viewing the Party as a drag, ignoring it, approaching all age categories indiscriminately, etc.) often arise as a reaction to Party approaches to the League in an unsound manner. The Party considers it to be its duty to lead the fight for the vital needs of the youth among the population as a whole, seeking the suppor of labor in the first place for these demands.

II. Forms of Connection of the Party & the League

Central to being able to develop many-sided forms of aid to the League's development and the fullest relationships of mutual advantage is the establishing of regular forms of connection between the Party District and the League Section. These forms may include the following:

A. Youth elected as part of the national and/or section League leadership who are Party members may also be elected members of the National, Central Committee, the Political Bureau or District Committee or District Board.

B. In addition to this, it is most important to establish at the district levels a regular system of relations. This means regular meetings on the order of frequency of once a month to discuss the on-going cooperation of the Party and League and what the Party might do among adults with respect to the needs of the youth. This may involve one or more Party leaders meeting with one or more League leaders. All question of Party-League relations should be centralized through this form no matter whatever additional connections exist so there is no piece-meal approach to the League. At the National level such a form exists.

C. Leading Party youth who are part of the League leadership may be elected members of other district bodies such as commissions. While this is a desirable long term direction both for the needs of the Party and League, the size of the League cadre and their need to be on a whole set of League bodies has to be considered. In most districts, it is placing too great a burden on these comrades to be on any additional bodies of the Party besides those indicated under "A" and "B" above and placement on commissions will frequently have to await further League development.

III. Areas of Cooperation

A. Mass issues and demands. At all levels, national district and club, the Party should cooperate in building support among adults for the main youth demands - jobs, job training, a quality integrated education and free higher education, recreation, against police brutality, for specific affirmative action programs, etc. On all major social issues there should be a

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coordination of efforts, with encouragement to the League to develop specifically youth approaches and often special youth forms of organization. Clearly the greater the cooperation, the greater the benefits to both organizations in struggles on all mass issues. There will be some fronts of struggle and organizational forms on which the League will be unable to participate fully or at all until it is stronger, considering the specific youth issues and forms in which it must be active. The League can not be expected to assume the same weight of responsibilities as the Party.

B. Electoral activity. In working out campaigns and candidates for local, city, state and federal office, there is the need for the closest cooperation and consultation from the earliest stages. These may be Communist Party campaigns or Communist and other left and independent forces working together. Consultation is needed on general policy and program, the question of possible youth candidates, youth issues and program, possible special youth committees, the petition effort and campaigning. It is our desire that special youth forms and approaches be developed rather than losing these under pressure of the election calendar.

C. Education. While the League at the national, section and branch level decides what kind of educational programs it wants and organizes them, it is natural that the League call on the Party for assistance in this vital area of League activity. Whether it be schools, classes, summer youth encampments, weekend seminars, etc. the Party can help with teachers (in addition to League teachers), literature, other facilities and its experience in educational work.

D. Work Among High School Age Youth

Work among high school age youth is one of the most rapidly growing areas for the League. It is also one of the most important since it lowers the age level of the whole League and stresses its youthful nature. The League seeks to build a special high school division and separate branches for these youth, with transitional forms where that is not immediately possible. Cooperation of the Party with the League is especially important in this work as the high school forms will need young adult or adult advisors and people with special skills particularly in educational, cultural and sports fields. If the League is unable to meet all these needs itself, assistance from the Party in obtaining cooperation of such Party or progressive older cadre will be necessary.

E. Discussion of the Work of Party Members Who Are in the League

All Party members gain greatly from club ideological and political discussions and projections of mass struggle on the issues. These help the member make greater contributions in the fight for the people's needs among non-Party masses and organizations. This is also true of young Party members who are likewise members of the League and active among youth.

In discussing the political work of these Party members, we keep in mind the organizational independence of the League and that each generation comes to socialism in a different way, reflecting its own experiences. We do not want to create two centers of leadership for the League or for Party members in it. All League members, including those who are in the Party are expected to respond to the leadership within the League that runs from the National Council to the Section Committee to Branches and we seek to strengthen League internal unity around that leadership.

Therefore, club political discussions seek to coordinate the efforts of the Party among adults and the League among youth in common struggles and activities and avoid any tendency to discuss like a super-exec. of the League branch. Periodically the Party club should discuss in general how the League branch is doing over-all and what it can do to help. While influencing the League ideologically and politically and seeking a common position with it on local issues, the club should not seek to change League branch policy with regard to section or national youth developments and policies. Any questions of this kind should go through the district or national Party leadership to the corresponding League leadership.

In these ways, regular attendance of Party members who are also members of the League at their Party club meetings is especially beneficial for the Party club, the member and for the work of the League.

F. Press & Literature.

The Party seeks to help build the mass distribution publications of the League, particularly the Young Worker. The Young Worker should be part of the literature available at all Party meetings, including at the club level. When working to build the Daily World, People's World & Voz Del Pueblo, Party members who expect to meet young people should have the Young Worker with them. The same is true of League mass pamphlets, while major documents of the League should be made available at all levels of the Party.

In addition, Party periodicals need constantly to improve in their reflection of the work and activity of the League, of youth struggles and on the needs of youth and adult support for them, as well as theoretical aspects of the "youth question." Concrete plans and measures are needed to assure this. Pamphlet publishing on issues of greatest concern to youth needs to be worked out in conjunction with the League.

At the same time, through the system of connections of the Party and League, use of the Party press, periodicals and literature in the inner life and mass activity of the League needs to be strengthened with various types of special offers playing a role in stimulating its use. Such greater use can aid the League in its education and mass activity and all-round development.

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G. Recruiting & Overlap of Membership

Both the League and Party always need to grow and need more active, leading forces - cadre. In this period in the life of both, these needs are even greater, reflecting the growth of the mass struggle and its demands, their still relatively limited size and the history of development especially of the Party, which history has created greater cadre needs that the Party has not yet been able to solve fully. It is within this framework we seek approaches that will assist both to grow most rapidly and meet their respective cadre needs.

In meeting its membership and cadre needs, the Party seeks to do it in such a way that the League grows even more rapidly and so that the leading young people who are Party members are not drawn out of League work, causing severe problems for continued League development.

The Party seeks to help build the League in terms of its numbers, social composition and age level. This is a task for all levels of the Party. At the club level, every club should seek to help build the corresponding League branch or if there is no branch, to work itself or together with other Party clubs and the League section to build a new branch. Party members who are not in the League often have personal relationships through their place of work, neighbors or mass activities with young people and can bring these young people close to the League, even introduce the League to them and then put the League directly in contact with them. Turning over casual contacts to the League is not particularly helpful at this stage of the League's development. With limited resources, it must concentrate on the most promising situations. Party members should seek to bring the young person along as far as possible and stick with them until the League is able to follow up. At the same time, we should avoid developing relations which result in forms that become a local substitute for the League. We should seek to bring all youth ages 14 through 24 into the League. Youth should be asked to spend a year in the League before being recruited into the Party. The general rule is that all Party members below the age of 25 are to be assigned to be members of the League. As members of the League, their main political assignments are to come from the League. They should be given no substantial or long term Party assignments without consultation with the League Section leadership. As League members who are also Party members they are expected to set a good example by accepting and carrying out substantial, inner League and mass activity assignments and, therefore, will be unable to carry such a double load. League members who are Party members should not be placed on Party bodies, including club execs, without consultation with the League Section leadership. A League member may be placed on a club exec, if there is no additional responsibility and the purpose is to reflect youth work in the exec.

In the case of League members who are also Party members and work in a shop where the Party and not the League is building a club, then the Party may make substantial assignments such as rank and file and union work but should make sure the comrade is able to devote some time to League assignments based on consultation with the League.

The League has an industrial concentration policy that parallels the Party's. It seeks to build among young industrial workers, especially in basic industry. At this time, however, its working class branches are being built on a territorial principle and not as shop branches. In addition to the working class neighborhood branches, the League is seeking to build committees and other special forms that assist its trade unionists with a youth approach to their shops and unions. Coordination between Party and League is needed in this work.

Party comrades at or above the age of 25 who are in the national, section or even branch leadership of the League may be given major Party assignments or reassigned completely out of League work only after consultation with Section or national League leadership (in cases of League National Council and other national cadre.) Any changes of assignment proposed by the Party for a member of the League National Council or other national cadre whould also be brought to the attention of the Party's Central Committee before being carried out. League Section leadership is to be consulted even with regard to changes affecting League branch leadership because each Party club has no way of assessing the cumulative impact of assignment changes by a number of Party clubs on the League Section and its work.

Over a period of years it is our aim to help reduce the percentage of League members who are also Party members based on our own and world experience on this question. The best way to do this, of course, is recruit youth much more rapidly into the League than into the Party. We also plan in the future gradually to limit which League members may be recruited into the Party, moving in the direction of restricting this only to the most leading people at the national and section levels of the League.

H. Financial Assistance

The Party is interested in helping the League develop a firm, consistent and growing base of financial support. This means helping the League with contacts with non-Party supporters and on various fund-raising projects, in developing its dues, sustainer and fund drive system.

Party members who are also League members are expected to set an example in the League for dues payment, sustaining and fund drive pledge fulfillment. In order to avoid a double burden on these comrades, they are excused from Party sustainer pledges and fund drive pledges. Their Party dues rate is to be the minimum monthly amount of 50. The Party club financial secretary, however, is to check with each member who is a League member as to whether they are paying their League dues, sustainer and fund drive pledge at the same time they check on other Party members with regard to Party dues, sustainer and fund drive.

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